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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *February* the 28th, 1754.

THOUGH the following letters are written upon more ſerious ſubjects, and in a graver ſtyle and manner than are common to this paper, which is profeſſedly devoted to the ridicule of vice, folly and falſe taſte, yet as they are intended for public benefit, and may contain ſome uſeful hints and informations, I ſhall preſent them to my readers without farther preface.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

HIS Majeſty having frequently recommended to his parliament to conſider of proper means to put a ſtop to the

the numerous robberies and murders amongſt us, I ſhall want no apology for ſending you my thoughts upon that ſubject. Many perſons have been of opinion that ſeverer puniſhments were neceſſary in theſe caſes; but conſtant experience proves the contrary, and that the conſequence is only making rogues more deſperate, and thereby increaſing the danger, inſtead of providing for the ſecurity, of honeſt men. One thing only I think might ſafely be done with reſpect to puniſhments, which is, that no criminal (except in very particular circumſtances) who is clearly convicted, ſhould eſcape by tranſportation or otherwiſe. The lenity of the government ſuffers this in hopes of an amendment; but when the mind is once corrupted to ſo great a degree, it is ſeldom capable of any virtuous ſentiments; and the caſe of ſuch perſons is, that they generally return from tranſportation in a ſhort time, and fall immediately into the ſame company and profligate courſe of life as before. Such kind of pardons are conſidered by rogues no otherwiſe than as giving them hopes of perpetrating their crimes with impunity; and conſequently muſt produce a very bad effect. I am confirmed in this opinion by monſieur Secondat, who in his excellent treatiſe upon the SPIRIT OF LAWS, ſays, "That if we enquire into "the cauſe of all human corruptions, we ſhall find that "they proceed from the impunity of crimes, and not "from the moderation of puniſhments." But then I muſt add, that if the puniſhment for robbery is made more certain, there ought to be a diſtinction (unleſs hanging in chains is thought a ſufficient one) between that and murder, leſt the robber ſeeing the puniſhment the ſame, and equally certain, may be tempted to kill, in order to his concealment. However, it is the buſineſs

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of every legiſlature rather to make good regulations for preventing crimes, than to contrive puniſhments for them.

The ingenious Mr. Fielding, in a very ſenſible pamphlet upon this ſubject, attributes the number of robberies in a great meaſure to the luxury and extravagance of the nation: but it appears to me that theſe are only remoter cauſes; for though luxury and extravagance reign in all our principal towns, yet the robberies are chiefly in and about London; and even when they happen in the country, they are generally commited by rogues, who make excurſions out of London at fairs, horſe-races and other public meetings; which clearly and evidently points out the true cauſe of them to be the *overgrown ſize of London*, affording infinite receptacles to ſharpers, thieves and villains of all kinds. Our magiſtrates have lately exerted themſelves with a very becoming ſpirit, in ſuppreſſing houſes of gaming and debauchery; but I am afraid the number of theſe houſes is ſo great, that all their endeavours will not produce any conſiderable benefit to the public. The buildings in London have been increaſed prodigiouſly within theſe thirty years; and the ill conſequences of this increaſe ſeem not to have been enough conſidered; but it is certain that a large metropolis is the greateſt evil in any country, and the ſource and fountain of all the corruption that is in it. It appears from the bills of mortality that the burials in London vaſtly exceed the chriſtenings. This annual ſurplus, ſupplied in a great meaſure from the ſeveral counties, is a continual drain upon the people, and an immenſe loſs to the nation: and I cannot help recommending it to thoſe gentlemen who are for increaſ-

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ing the number of our people by a general naturalization-bill, to provide in the mean time for the ſecurity and preſervation of thoſe we have already.

THE monſtrous ſize of our capitol is one great cauſe of the exceſſive luxury that prevails amongſt us. The infinite numbers of people that reſort hither, naturally rival each other in their tables, dreſs, equipage, furniture, and in ſhort, extravagances of all ſorts. Notwithſtanding the late neceſſary regulations, a continual round of amuſement and entertainment is invented for every day in the week; and by this means the mind is kept in a conſtant hurry and diſſipation, and rendered unfit for any ſerious employment. Can mothers of this turn, immerſed in vanity and folly, be ſuppoſed capable of any domeſtic concerns? What a proſpect is here of the morals of the riſing age! And, what is worſe, this love of pleaſure is carried into the country, and a general diſſoluteneſs ſpreads itſelf through the whole kingdom. Hence it is that gentlemen even of ſmall fortunes are impatient of the country, and crowd to the diverſions of London, contracting an expenſive taſte, and ruining their families. Nor is this love of pleaſure confined only to genteel life; the common people eaſily follow the example of thoſe above them; and as they have no fund to ſupport them without labour, the conſequence of idleneſs and extravagance, in them, is immediate poverty; which neceſſarily throws them into ſharping, robbery, and all kinds of diſhoneſty. So that I believe it may truly be affirmed, that the luxury and corruption of any nation is juſt in proportion to it's wealth, and the largeneſs of it's metropolis.

THUANUS tells us, that in the reign of Henry the ſecond, there was an edict made to prohibit any buildings

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in the ſuburbs of Paris; and in queen Elizabeth's time a bill paſſed to prevent the increaſe of London; but like other good laws, it ſoon grew obſolete and loſt it's effect.

In what manner our metropolis may be reduced without injury to the proprietors of houſes and ground-rents, I do not pretend to determine; but it ſeems abſolutely neceſſary that a ſtop ſhould be put to any farther building: and if beſides this, the ruinous houſes in the back parts of the town, ſuch as Hockley in the hole, &c. which are the grand receptacles for ſharpers and pickpockets, and which might be purchaſed at an eaſy rate, were annually to be bought up, the materials ſold, and the ground thrown into open fields, the town in a few years would be conſiderably reduced, the health of the people very greatly improved, and the number of gameſters, thieves, lewd women, &c. gradually diminiſhed.

I am &c.

To Mr. Fitz-Adam.

Sir,

As you profeſs not only to amuſe but to inſtruct; and as the early grounding of youth in true fortitude and the love of their country are objects worthy of the moſt ſerious attention; give me leave to caution parents and guardians through your channel againſt an evil they ſeem inſenſible of, the evil of ſending youths unacquainted with the world, even raw from ſchool, to French academies; where no ſooner are they got together, than thoſe who preſide in the councils of that kingdom, ever attentive to ſow the ſeeds of diſſention in theſe nations, detach a number of Iriſh officers, who by ſpeaking our language, and introducing theſe heedleſs boys into the pleaſures of the place, eaſily inſinuate themſelves,